

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
OF THE
URBAN FUNCTIONS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT
PROJECT IN UPPER VOLTA

May 14 — May 31, 1980

Prepared for:

Agency for International Development
Washington, D. C.

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July 15, 1980

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The content of this report is the result of a visit by the consultant to Upper Volta during the period May 14-31, 1980. The objective of the visit was to assist DS/UD and the USAID Mission with the final evaluation of the field application of the Urban Functions in Rural Development (UFRD) project in Upper Volta. This effort was to evaluate the effectiveness of the field application based on the stated objectives and purpose of the project, the terms of the Project Agreement (ProAg) and the evaluation terms of reference contained in the ProAg. The objective of this report is to emphasize lessons learned, to judge the appropriateness of the methodologies applied to the project and to make recommendations for adapting the Upper Volta experience to other sites.

For purposes of consistency and comparability, this report's presentation follows approximately the format established by the Mid-Term Evaluation Report of October 17, 1979 and the Report of the Project Management Review of March 12, 1980. It meets the requirements of Section 5.1 of the ProAg concerning Project Evaluation; and the substance of the evaluation is in accordance with the Logical Framework approach recommended in USAID project evaluation guidelines. The evaluation process utilized in Upper Volta, and in particular the substance of meetings held there, is described in Annex 1.

During the course of this evaluation, some questions arose concerning the UFRD concept and its application in Upper Volta. The issue lies outside the scope of the evaluation and is not included in this report. However, it will be pertinent to the overall evaluation of UFRD projects at a later date, and so a separate technical note on the matter has been prepared and submitted to DS/UD. The note's title is "The Concept of Urban Functions in Rural Development, and its Application."

2.0 THE PROJECT

Since 1973, the U.S. Agency for International Development has focused much of its attention on the developmental problems of the rural poor and the agricultural activities in which the latter engage. It was incumbent, therefore, upon the Office of Urban Development, Bureau for Development Support (DS/UD), to explore ways and means by which its activities in the arena of urban development could be made complementary and supportive of USAID's general interest in promoting rural development.

Examination of USAID's rural programs by staff and consultants of DS/UD revealed that quite often these were single- or multi-sectoral projects which did not take sufficient account of the spatial factors impinging upon the effective impact of such projects. In particular it was noted that these projects, even including large "integrated agricultural development" programs, tended to overlook the possible relationship between rural development and the development of major towns in and around the areas of concern.

In casting about for a new conceptual framework which, in theory at least, could tie together urban and rural development efforts, DS/UD followed several avenues. These included review of theory and experience concerning "growth poles" and "development centers," but it was found that the ethereal expectations from such notions never matched the effects in practice. A more interesting possibility presented itself through the literature of economic geography which had to do with the presence or absence of a hierarchy of centers (e.g., service centers, market towns, regional centers, etc.) in and around specific rural-agricultural areas. A study reviewing the pertinent literature and experience was then contracted in order to probe deeper into the potential

utility of the approach. This resulted in the completion of a report entitled "Urban Functions in Rural Development" in 1976. In essence the study attempted to explain how services and facilities located in urban areas could be used and strengthened for promotion of rural development, and set out what appeared to be an operational strategy for a more integrated urban-rural approach in which the starting point would be an assessment of the gaps, weaknesses and deficient linkages in a regional system of cities, towns and service centers; in terms of provision of service to surrounding rural areas and their populations.

To the extent that the only true test of the utility of this approach, as opposed to any other methods used for rural development purposes, was to implement it on a trial basis and evaluate the outcome; DS/UD circulated the report to USAID field missions in order to see if there was an interest in undertaking the experiment. Expressions of interest were obtained from several missions, and after necessary visits and discussions projects were serially developed for the Philippines, Upper Volta and Bolivia; areas reflecting quite different opportunities and constraints for rural development and hence quite different environments for judging the utility of the "Urban Functions in Rural Development" (UFRD) concept in practice. These three demonstrations were to be rigorously evaluated during and after their implementation to see if the UFRD method was more suited to one set of circumstances than another.

The Upper Volta project was initiated by a pre-design team from DS/UD in July 1977 and led to the signing of the Project Grant Agreement on August 31, 1977. The Project Assistance Completion Date (PACD) was set for March 31, 1980, and was extended, in February 1980, to June 9th of that year; with completion of the project's Final Technical Report scheduled for May 14th, 1980 to permit a final evaluation prior to the extended termination date.

The project, as defined in Section 2.1 and Annex 1 of the ProAg, was to consist of the provision of technical assistance to the staff of the Agricultural Planning Cell of the Ministry of Rural Development, and to the staff of the participating Regional Development Organizations (ORD's) of the Ministry at Koudougou and Fada N'Gourma. It was intended that the technical assistance provided under the project would be used to train existing Ministerial personnel in planning methods for urban-rural development. The planning methods would be developed through a series of urban functions studies and the practical application of integrated urban-rural planning methods. The project was to produce a practical development plan for strengthening the contributions of urban centers to rural development in the respective ORD's; and was to include a list of future project priorities which, based on project findings, were determined to be appropriate for strengthening urban functions in rural development.

Besides these explicit characteristics of the project in Upper Volta, the implicit agenda, which is related to the general UFRD overview presented above, is that the degree of success obtained in meeting project objectives would indicate the degree of utility of the UFRD approach with respect to rural development in general.

3.0 EVALUATION OF ATTAINMENT OF PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Extracting from the foregoing definition, the project had four explicit and interrelated objectives. These were:

- To carry out urban functions studies of the centers in the Fada (eastern) and Kougougou (center-west) ORD's.
- To develop a plan for strengthening the contributions of urban centers to rural development.
- To include in this development plan a list of future project priorities which, based on project findings, are determined to be appropriate for strengthening urban facilities and services in rural development; these projects may include the upgrading or strengthening of existing facilities and services as well as the initiation of new ones.
- To increase the capacities of the Ministry of Rural Development the Agriculture Planning Cell and the Koudougou and Fada ORD's in the planning methodologies and processes of urban/rural development.

3.1 Urban Functions Studies

Surveys of urban functions in the Fada and Koudougou ORD's were completed by the project. This involved a sequence of steps which began with identification of 1,300 towns, villages and hamlets in both ORD's, development of regional scalograms for 108 of them having urban functions, and selection from the 108 of 44 with concentrations of such functions. These 44 were described with a set of additional scalograms, a series of monographs providing detailed descriptions of each place, and two maps locating the places within each region. The studies were complemented by a separate survey of 60 important markets undertaken through a sub-contract to SAED. There are strengths and weaknesses in these sets of data.

The strengths, deriving largely from the project's decision to go directly to the field rather than rely on secondary information obtainable in Ougadougou or the ORD offices in Koudougou and Fada N'Gourma, include detailed and highly useful information on the existence, physical condition and operational levels of selected functions such as health and education facilities, public servant housing (e.g., for nurses, mid-wives, extension agents, etc.), and so on. At the same time, because of its "grass roots orientation," the project was able to step beyond the gathering of cold facts and deal with important normative dimensions such as the aspirations of local communities in terms of services desired and the degree of dynamic participatory involvement of the communities in terms of maintenance and operation of existing or new facility-based services. The markets data indicates a great deal of valuable information on their size, their location and the hierarchial structure of their areas of influence.

The weaknesses include the absence of detailed information on many functions which are directly related to agricultural production such as agricultural processing facilities, storage facilities, credit, availability of tools, fertilizer, seeds, etc., marketing services, extension services, etc. A major weakness is the absence of detailed information on the principal towns of Koudougou and Fada N'Gourma.

Besides the carrying out of surveys of services existing in towns, the urban functions studies were to consist of several analytical tasks including the development of a hierarchial classification scheme for settlements, the analysis of linkages between places and services, the determination of areas of influence of major centers, the assessment of agricultural activity and potential of each region, the identification of urban-rural linkages critical to the support of rural and agricultural development (by means of a spatial modelling and interviews with local individuals), and the identification of weaknesses and gaps existing in urban services to rural development. Although these tasks were specified

in the ProAg, they were understood to be guidelines for things to be achieved in order to develop plans and projects. Latitude was given for modification and adaptation to the particular circumstances of Upper Volta in the two ORD's concerned as required.

Unfortunately, although the project exercised the latitude provided to it in interpreting the tasks set down as guidelines in the ProAg, the ProAg itself was never modified to conform to the adaptations which evolved during the life of the project. For the purposes of the Final Evaluation, this presents a problem because there is no reference which defines what the urban function studies should have been comprised of. If, for example, the specific tasks set down in the ProAg were to be accepted literally, then it is clear that the urban functions studies were not completed. The classification scheme noted above was attempted, but it did not prove useful to the project. The linkage analysis was limited to health and education facilities essentially; and in some degree to markets. Agricultural activity was assessed. The remaining tasks would be regarded as having basically not been attempted (Annex 2).

If, on the other hand tasks set down in the ProAg are not used as the reference for defining the composition of the urban functions studies, then there is no clear method by which to evaluate the extent to which this project objective was achieved. In this situation the consultant has had to make a very normative judgment about what types of tasks should have been feasible and necessary in order to develop a plan and a list of project priorities; two other project objectives are discussed below. In this context, the concluding judgment is that the objective of carrying out a comprehensive set of urban functions studies was only partially achieved by the project (Annex 2).

3.2 Development of a Plan for Strengthening Contributions of Urban Centers

The project developed several ideas for strengthening urban functions. Some took the form of projects and are discussed below. Others took the form of somewhat general statements to the effect that what was needed in towns were the elements of local government capability and a corresponding fiscal resource base. But given the content of the Final Technical Report (Annex 3), the contractor's final report (Annex 4), and the partial completion of tasks which would have led to the development of a plan, noted above, the project did not develop the plan originally anticipated. The Final Technical Report is an excellent overview of the respective ORD's and some of the urban functions within them. It is not a complete planning document and contains no sections which, strictly speaking, could be interpreted as a regional plan of one sort or another. This objective, therefore, was not achieved.

3.3 List of Future Project Priorities

There are two sets of projects proposed in the Final Technical Report. The first is a series of small projects, or micro-projects, which are implementable in the very short term. These include construction of housing for extension workers, supply of animals and ploughs for Young Farmer Training Centers, welding equipment for metal artisans, supplies for a Free nursery, construction of storage bins, supply of desks for schools, repair of schools, latrines and kitchens, provision of athletic equipment to schools, repair of dispensaries and maternity clinics, supply of mattresses and other equipment to these health facilities, and so on. Locations for these micro-projects are not made very specific, except that they should be located among the 44 principal centers studied by the project.

The second program is a set of more substantial projects which are implementable in the medium-term, and which would require further feasibility

analyses. In the East ORD these are the construction in Fada N'Gourma of a hotel (30-60 rooms), two restaurants, a movie theatre, a departmental library, electricity and water supply systems and a nut-oil extraction factory; a similar factory in Bogande; and the repair of the Fada-Benin road. In the Center-West ORD the projects are water and electricity systems for the towns of Reo and Yako, and the building of a bank at Ouessa.

Both sets of projects were in some sense related to project findings. The first responded to the stated desires of ordinary people and public officials at the local level who were in contact with the members of the project team. The micro-projects do not respond to all community aspirations, but were developed in order to eventually show some immediate responsiveness to the communities which assisted the project effort. The second responded to the stated desires of ORD-level officials, and included projects which had already been identified by the ORD Directors and others (Annex 1).

If the purpose of the project had been to make an inventory of all undertakings recommended locally, which by their nature would be located in principal centers, then one might conclude that this project objective had been achieved. However, the spirit of the ProAg seems to suggest that what was wanted was the application of some methods of spatial planning analysis to the circumstances of the regions concerned. The purpose was to identify projects from the analyses. Since all the types of analyses had not been done, as indicated above, then the projects cannot be said to have evolved entirely from application of the methods in question. Therefore, whatever the merits of the proposed projects might be, they do not entirely satisfy this project objective; and hence the objective cannot be said to have been fully achieved. Again, however, it is to be noted that this conclusion results from having no evaluative reference other than the project description contained in Annex 1 of the ProAg.

3.4 Increase in Planning Capacity of the Ministry of Rural Development

With regard to the members of the Voltaic project team, both current and past, a significant increase in capacity has been achieved with respect to understanding of the conditions of rural life, the constraints on rural development, the input needs to sustain economic progress, the methods of carrying out direct and indirect socio-economic surveys, the preparation of scalograms, the interrelationships associated with foreign assistance (*i.e.*, AID) and the difference between rural development presented in text books and rural development as observed. This learning can largely be attributed to the excellent working environment promoted by the U.S. contractor, the decision to deal directly with rural populations mentioned earlier rather than rely on secondary information, and the decision to exercise wide latitude in adapting theory to realistic practice.

While important, improved capacities in the areas described was not the basic purpose of the project. The objective was improved capacity in the area of rural-regional development planning to be achieved by applying the types of tasks generally outlined in the ProAg. To the extent that these tasks, as mentioned, were not entirely applied to the development of plans and projects, one cannot expect that the team members would have learned things specifically related to the types of planning methodologies originally envisaged.

Outside the project team, that is, in the Planning Cell of the Ministry and in the two ORD's, contact with the project's personnel did not add much to what was already known in terms of rural life. Since the anticipated planning techniques were not executed to any great extent by the project, they could not have been expected to be learned about by outside individuals. The original project objective, therefore, can be evaluated as having only very partially been achieved.

4.0 PROBLEMS WHICH CONSTRAINED ATTAINMENT OF OBJECTIVES

There were four major problems which hindered progress of the project and which resulted in the limited degree to which original objectives were attained. These were: (1) the delay in getting the project started; (2) the characteristics of technical assistance provided over the life of the project; (3) technical monitoring of the project's progress; and (4) administrative/financial issues. There were other problems as well, but these four were the dominant ones.

The Project Agreement was signed on August 31, 1977, and its expected completion date was set for March 31, 1980 (PACD). The description of the project contained an element referring to about two years of technical assistance -- the first with a resident U.S. contractor and the second with quarterly two-week visits from the same or another source of technical support. At the latest, therefore, the project should have got started with the arrival of a resident contractor around March 1978. In fact, the contractor did not arrive until March 1979; the causes for the delay being attributed to slowness in clearance from Small Business in issuance of an RFP and in selection of a contractor. The final evaluation has therefore look at a project which received considerably less technical assistance from AID than was originally planned; and this is the principal reason why it appears that the project had progressed so little.

The second factor was the nature of technical assistance actually provided (Annex 5). The preparation of the ProAg in the summer of 1977 was not accompanied by a significant effort to adapt and mould it to the circumstances of Upper Volta at that time. The project was therefore not well understood at the outset. The relevant effort was not undertaken until

July-August 1978 by short-term assistance missions from AID/W, but these were either too short or too bent on accomplishing ProAg tasks. The Voltaic team in place at that time was not able to begin technical work on its own, and had not fully grasped the meaning and objectives of UFRD. After arrival of the resident contractor, although technical work began in earnest immediately, the project began to drift away from the specific intents spelled out in the ProAg, and shifted towards something which at the time was called "local government functions in rural development" by the contractor, or which is now sometimes called "rural public service in rural development." This drift was not picked up until the arrival of a Project Management Review mission (originally slated as the final evaluation mission, but redefined because of lack of project progress) in February 1980. The mission attempted to put the project back "on track" and arranged a short extension of the project completion date from March to June 1980; but by this time there were only a very few weeks left before the Final Report of the project became due (May 14, 1980). There was insufficient time left to fully correct previous weaknesses (Annex 5).

Implicit in the foregoing was the effectiveness of technical monitoring of the progress of the project by DS/UD. It was, for example, unfortunate that after having recognized the project to be effectively starting one year from its agreed-upon completion date, no major effort was taken to modify the objectives set forward in the ProAg to allow for the reduced time frame. More importantly, however, weaknesses in monitoring were evident in the manner by which the contractor was permitted to let the technical assistance provided slip toward something other than original objectives. This is explained to some extent by administrative problems, discussed below but it does not explain everything (Annex 4). Even with limited time and administrative problems, better monitoring would have accelerated the progress of the project.

The administrative/financial problems affected relations between the project and the USAID mission in Ouagadougou. Its underlying cause was the fact that USAID staff were overloaded with supervisory responsibilities for a large portfolio of projects in Upper Volta. USAID developed a negative impression of the project in the summer of 1979 when a vehicle was purchased outside the country without prior approval from the USAID mission. Upon arrival of the project's Mid-Term Evaluation mission in October 1979, its members were obliged to spend almost the whole of the duration of their stay keeping the USAID mission and the Ambassador from cancelling the UFRD project immediately. This kept the evaluation mission from looking at the technical progress of the project closely and so may have prevented the development of a needed mid-course correction. It also may have prevented discussion of the need for an extension to make up for the earlier delays in project initiation (Annex 5).

Besides the issue of identifying the problems which constrained the meeting of project objectives, there is the issue of whether those objectives would have been obtainable even without any problems. Discussion undertaken during this evaluation with qualified technicians in Upper Volta would seem to suggest that the UFRD methodologies, as presented in the ProAg, and in supplementary texts and reports provided to the project team, could not have been expected by themselves to lead to the development of regional plans and the identification of fundable projects -- two key objectives. The achievement of these would have required the complementary use of a full range of analyses provided through the methodologies of regional and rural development planning. Nothing in the correspondence or reports associated with the project in Upper Volta can provide clues as to whether the project designers in 1977 assumed that no other technical analyses were required; or assumed that such technical analyses were already being undertaken as part of the day-to-day responsibilities of the Planning Cell and the respective ORD's.

Whatever the actual assumption may have been, this technical matter did not itself constrain progress. The other problems mentioned prevented the project from reaching a point of advancement where this issue would have started to make its effects felt (e.g., a possible inability to identify projects). It is discussed here in order to re-emphasize the possibility that some of the objectives stated in the ProAg may have been overambitious with respect to the inputs required to achieve them. In such a case the progress of the project relative to realistic objectives might be deemed much closer than the preceding discussion would lead one to believe. Perhaps only the first of the four stated objectives was really feasible.

In general, given the input obligations of the actors involved in the Project Agreement (Annex 6), and the foregoing elaboration of major problems confronting the project during its lifetime, it seems evident that the basic failure in terms of execution was the responsibility of AID.

5.0 METHODS TO OVERCOME PROBLEMS

At this point, as was the case during the Project Management Review of February 1980, there is only one way to overcome the problems described. This is an extension of the project beyond its completion date of June 9, 1980. During the final evaluation a letter to this effect was prepared by the consultant and forwarded to the USAID mission in Upper Volta (Annex 7).

6.0 DEVELOPMENT IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The substantive development impact of a technical assistance project such as the one undertaken in Upper Volta derives from two things. First is the level of increase in the planning capacity of the Ministry, and second is the degree to which such an increase leads planners to identify productive and implementable projects which would benefit rural populations. The development impact in this case is synonymous with the evaluation of the degree to which project objectives were achieved, which was discussed above. Setting aside the question of whether the objectives were indeed attainable, the net conclusion from the foregoing is that the development impact of the project has been far less than had been hoped for in terms of increased planning capacity, and in terms of abilities to identify projects with that increase in capability. A lot more on-the-job training could have taken place.

7.0 LESSONS LEARNED

A general set of issues constituting the lessons learned through implementation of the UFRD project cannot hope to cover all the various facets involved. It is for this reason that extensive annexes have been developed as part of this final evaluation. Extracting from as much material as time would permit, the annexes represent a record of the life of the project and a detailed reading of several of them would prove highly useful to avoid in the future such problems as did befall this project. The principal themes running through the supplementary material, as well as lessons drawn during earlier missions, are summarized below.

1. Many of the analytical methodologies associated with the concept of "Urban Functions in Rural Development" are specialized and tend to be understood more readily by technicians who are well-versed in economic geography or spatial planning. At the same time, however, the theory and practice of rural development tends to be understood best by individuals who have combined technical training with several years of field experience on agricultural projects. If the technical assistance component of a project like UFRD is filled by technicians of the former type, there is invariably a risk that the output would tend to be somewhat esoteric and removed from the practical realities of rural and agricultural life. If the assistance component is filled by technicians of the latter type, then there is an opposite risk of having the methodologies viewed as too academic and then abandoned in favor of approaches that seem more pertinent to the situation at hand (e.g., local government services in rural development, basic needs for rural populations, etc.). Thus the technical assistance inputs for a project like UFRD, to be fruitful and to assure that the evolution of the project remains on course while being modified to suit particular circumstances, requires the use of technicians who are both qualified in the methods and experienced in rural development. Americans with such qualifications willing to work overseas are rare, and rarer still if required to be fluent in French. In order to avoid technical difficulties and delays in a project which might result from not being able to secure an optimally qualified contractor, it may be advisable for AID to incorporate a sufficiently large contingency in project budgets which could be used if necessary to supplement the technical activities of a partially qualified resident contractor with regular short-term contractors (say, for quarterly visits); or even for the use of two resident contractors if need be. For small projects this might seem to imply an excessive technical assistance cost, but for a project like UFRD in Upper Volta such an increased cost might more accurately reflect the true cost of obtaining

required technical support services from the U.S. The alternatives are use of non-Americans, cancellation of projects, or the continued high risk of unsuccessful project implementation.

2. The methods of UFRD are, by their nature, a set of techniques which are additions to a standard inventory of methodologies used regularly in regional or rural development planning. The utility of the UFRD methods are based on the fact that they deal with the spatial organization of socio-economic activities, and so when added to other techniques drawn from economics, finance, sociology, anthropology, etc., planning and project identification capabilities are enhanced. To be effective, therefore, UFRD must be incorporated into a planning process where all or most of the other methods are already in use and already understood. However, just because a host country has a Ministry, Department or Cell which carries the title of "Planning," it does not necessarily follow that such administrative units actually carry out the technical activities normally associated with planning, or that they have the equipment and personnel required to carry out those activities. If this is in fact the case in a host country (as it was in Upper Volta), then UFRD should not be introduced there; or at least not by itself. What such a country might need in the way of technical support is basic regional and sectoral planning assistance. In such a case UFRD might be identified as one of very many components which would make up the assistance package. Alternatively, UFRD might as readily be postponed until regular planning activities take hold. Either way, it is essential to look very carefully at the ongoing planning activities of host country agencies and then to decide whether circumstances are conducive to the introduction of UFRD.
3. The specialized nature of projects designed by AID/W, such as UFRD, makes it difficult to expect that USAID missions can adequately supervise technical aspects during preparation of project agreements or

during any subsequent phases. It is even more difficult if the missions have heavy workloads with other larger projects, or if they are subject to heavy staff turnover. In these circumstances it is absolutely essential that mechanisms be developed at the outset between AID/W and the missions regarding technical and administrative supervisory responsibilities, which are responsive to the budgetary and manpower constraints of both. One of the most important of these mechanisms is a clear line of communication in both directions which is used expeditiously to identify issues of concern as they develop. Such issues might include technical performance problems, administrative problems, questions arising from lack of comprehension of project direction and objectives, and so on. If such things are communicated quickly and clearly, then the risk of relatively minor issues becoming major crises is diminished, as is the risk of a project moving off in a direction never anticipated at the outset by AID/W or by the missions. On the positive side, good communication enhances the potential benefits of a project to AID/W and the missions as well as to host governments.

4. Any project which relies heavily on the gathering of original data through field surveys runs a great risk of generating strong expectations of assistance from respondents, especially if questions, like availability of water supplies or health facilities, are already a matter of local concern. There is a degree of frustration in that population if one study is followed by another rather than by some concrete evidence of improvement. A series of such situations eventually causes a population to become, at best, disinterested and uncooperative. There are several ways to avoid this. One is to neutralize the framework of a survey by emphasizing, for example, that it is strictly a research or census operation. A second method is to use surveyors whose normal responsibilities are associated with what the project is attempting to find out and whose presence a population is used to (e.g., health and school inspectors). A third method is to incorporate a sum into the project

budget which would eventually be used for some small projects. A fourth possibility, perhaps the most reasonable one, is to attach the project to areas where there is already a degree of assurance that implementation of something, related to the project or not, will take place, or where things are already taking place. In the UFRD project the choice of the Fada ORD was good in this respect. The Koudougou ORD offered fewer assurances when the original site selection was made.

5. The host government staffing of a project team sometimes involves appointment of individuals who already have other posts and other responsibilities, and so assurances are generally required regarding the proportion of time these individuals will dedicate to project activities. If actual time is much less than originally agreed upon, a small project can lose a considerable proportion of its effective manpower. Where possible, performance standards should be incorporated into a ProAg or its side-letters indicating that failure by an individual to comply with prior agreements may result in AID's request to the host government that the person in question be replaced by someone else, or that additional staff be appointed to make up for the loss in effective man-days. If the individual in question is a Project Director, then only the first option is reasonable. In general, however, appointments of Project Directors should be accepted by AID if and only if the individual proposed has no other professional obligations. This will minimize the risks of an absence of leadership, and the risks that U.S. contractors would have to fill the role by default. It is in any case highly advisable that host government personnel fill the role of Director of such projects whenever possible.
6. The progress of technical assistance projects, no matter how small they are or how simple they seem, should never be taken for granted. They require from the outset as great a level of careful monitoring and supervision as any other larger or apparently more complex assistance

programs. This is all the more important when projects are located in relatively inaccessible places, when the host country language is not one which is all that familiar to Americans, and when local USAID missions are not in a position to provide the necessary monitoring. Projects originating in AID/W are the responsibility of AID/W, and budgetary allowances should be made to permit such on-site supervision visits by AID/W as might become necessary under a hypothetical "worst-case" situation. For projects like UFRD, nothing less would do.

7. Whatever the form and extent of project monitoring may be, it is absolutely essential to always keep final evaluation criteria and procedures in mind. Such explicit awareness underscores the linkage which will invariably be made between project implementation and project objectives stated in ProAg's. It can serve as a constant reminder that a project must conform to the description made for it in a ProAg, and if in the process of monitoring such conformance is not apparent, then it is mandatory to immediately re-orient implementation or to immediately re-write the ProAg for it. This is the only reasonable way to assure that a project can be made subject to a valid evaluation.

8.0 SPECIAL COMMENT

This final evaluation of the UFRD project in Upper Volta is appropriate to AID requirements with respect to the original Project Assistance Completion Date. It is theoretically premature, however, because the project started over one year late and so the consultant has in effect evaluated one half of a project. Under other circumstances this final evaluation should have been a mid-term evaluation during which all the issues discussed

above and in the following annexes would have been used to correct problems and to develop an analytical work program for a subsequent six to 12 month period originally envisaged in the ProAg. The interpretation of the content of this report should be understood in the context described.

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ANNEX 1

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The process of evaluating the UFRD project in Upper Volta took two forms. One was the examination and appraisal of project documents in relation to stated objectives of the ProAg. These documents included the Final Technical Report, the contractor's final report, supplemental papers developed by the project team but not fully contained in the final reports and correspondence. The second was a process of intensive discussion with the principal individuals associated directly or indirectly with the project. These discussions were held over the span of two weeks at several separate meetings. A synopsis of the major meetings and their substance is given below in chronological order.

1. May 15, 1980 — Meeting with the Voltaic team composed of Dr. E. Pare, Mr. J. Compaore, and Mr. R. Tindano:
 - Agreement was reached on general purpose and objectives of the evaluation, and it was agreed that GOUV personnel would be involved at all stages.
2. May 16, 1980 — Meeting with Mr. Samir Zoghby (USAID mission):
 - Agreement was reached on using the stated objectives of the ProAg as the evaluation baseline, and it was agreed that the mission would assign a staff member to the evaluation as time permitted.
3. May 19, 1980 — Meeting with Ms. Tisna Veldhuyzen (geographer in the UNCHBP "HABITAT" project at Fada N'Gourma):
 - The UNCHBP Habitat project contacted UFRD contractor to obtain "urban functions" data for Fada in August 1979, but learned from the latter that purpose of functions data collection was to make scalograms only, and that basic objective of project was to identify needs of schools, dispensaries, etc. for the purposes of an eventual upgrading program. The UNCHBP project could not, therefore, use the

output of the UFRD project because it was not adequate for their purposes.

4. May 21, 1980 — Meeting with Mr. Albenque (UNDP) and Dr. Pare (UFRD):
 - Discussed purpose and objectives of UNDP-assisted regional planning program for the Ministry of Planning which was being initiated. Learned that spatial and sectoral planning methods would be combined as integrated method to assist Prefects of Departments in identifying regional projects for inclusion in national planning. Town-based planning would constitute one element of overall effort at decentralized planning.
5. May 22, 1980 — Meeting with Mr. Truore (ORD Director), Mr. Archange (ORD Deputy Director), and Mr. R. Tindano (UFRD) in Koudougou:
 - Discussed confusion surrounding purposes of UFRD, and lack of proper integration of team into ORD operations. Could not understand why UFRD never touched on agricultural production inputs seriously. During contractor's term focus on schools, dispensaries, etc appeared more oriented to supporting regional work of Ministries of Health and Education than Ministry of Rural Development. During post-contractor period (March-May 1980), ORD presented production-related projects like cereal banks and credit stations to the UFRD team, but these were considered insufficiently urban and were dropped. So on both counts the ORD did not see the supposed impact of urban functions in rural development. In any case, all projects were already known to the ORD, so the utility of having a special study to recount the obvious was in doubt. ORD cooperation was based on an understanding that such projects as would be identified would be eventually financed by AID or by other sponsors. If this was not the real purpose of UFRD, then the project could justifiably be accused of "false advertising." Also, if the intention of the project was to identify urban projects with positive rural impacts, then UFRD could be accused of poor execution of that purpose.
6. May 23, 1980 — Meeting with Mr. Zambo (ORD Deputy Director), Mr. Abdoulaye (ORD staff), Mr. R. Tindano (UFRD) and Ms. Morgan-Diallo (USAID mission):
 - UFRD was deemed related indirectly to objectives of ORD since nature of projects proposed did not have direct rural impact in all cases. The major utility of the project was to provide a good overview of what existed in

the region. The projects were already known and listed in ORD papers and UFRD was found to be a suitable vehicle for bringing these ideas to the attention of AID and others. In any case, more study is unlikely to uncover a wealth of new project ideas. The problem in Upper Volta has less to do with planning and more to do with a scarcity of financial and human means to do anything substantial. The fact that the project spent much of its time in the field was good in the sense that it communicated to central planners the difficulty of doing concrete things.

7. May 23, 1980 — Meeting with Mr. Wilcock (MSU Project Director), Mr. R. Tindano (UFRD), and Ms. Morgan-Diallo (USAID mission):
 - Until presented with the ProAg, MSU thought that UFRD was primarily engaged in survey and planning for public services in health and education, with less concern for economic-productive services. To the extent that MSU had much more in the way of resources for market and urban function studies, offers of coordination to use part of those resources were made to UFRD, but lack of synchronous timing and different purposes prevented it. Informal cooperation was maintained with reports and data moving well in both directions. Such double employment as did occur may have been the result of the ORD not having understood the full purpose of UFRD and thus of not having insisted upon more integration. The technical quality of UFRD work seen by MSU was deemed very good, most especially since it got away from mechanical operations and dealt with important normative elements, like self-help maintenance operations, local dynamics, etc. On the other hand, the work only very partially covered what was intended in the ProAg and thus it appeared that technical guidance from DS/UD was not sufficient. In any case, the methods of analysis outlined in the ProAg were not sufficient to identify projects since the necessary sectorial elements like demand and prices are absent. "Urban Functions" is a necessary component of rural planning but it cannot be used alone. For the information of the consultant it was noted that MSU was carrying out a socio-economic survey of 644 villages in the ORD, part of which would be used for its own urban functions component. With 16 local survey takers in a sub-contract it would take six weeks for the data to be gathered. This was the last task envisaged for this two year regional planning effort. Finally, it was noted that the great advantage of the UFRD project was that it would leave its technical competence in planning in the country. The MSU planning effort would

hardly leave anything since the basic work was done by expatriates and transfer of planning knowledge was not a component of their effort.

8. May 27, 1980 — Meeting with the entire UFRD project team, Ms. Morgan-Diallo (USAID), and Mr. Baouar (Director, Planning Cell):

- The discussion here was led alternatively by Dr. Pare and then by Mr. Baouar. Reflecting the position of the GOUV it was agreed that the UFRD project objectives had only very partially been achieved. The limited progress was reflected in such things as the elimination of Koudougou and Fada from detailed analysis, the extremely limited set of functions looked at in detailed studies of large villages (i.e., the 44 places), the concentration on existing local functions at the expense of looking at linkages to functions provided elsewhere, avoidance of the decentralization issues, the inability to get to the analytical phase of the work, the inability to identify projects from analysis, etc. The causes for this were identified as being several. One was the late start, substantive technical work not getting rolling until March 1979. Another was the lack of technical guidance to the project by DS/UD, both to the Voltaic team and to the contractor. The UFRD concept was never understood very well because there was no extensive initial period when the UFRD format could have been adapted to local conditions together with the Voltaic staff. It was felt that DS/UD should, in later months, have appreciated the technical limitations of the contractor and should have complemented the latter's establishment of excellent working relationships with necessary technical direction. A third factor, related to the previous two, was the psychology which developed around the possibility of implementation of a small works program using project funds. This led to focus on getting certain kinds of information at the expense of others and to minimizing expenses so that surveyors were never hired, sub-contracts were very limited, and basics such as drafting tables, paper and accessories were never purchased. It was considered regrettable that all these things happened. It was also considered regrettable that poor personal relationships had developed between the project and the USAID mission which now compromised the possibility of making up for lost ground (i.e., the latter's apparent unwillingness to extend the project further). For the future, it was suggested that in projects such as this one it would be constructive to have one solid liaison person at the mission with whom administrative and financial matters could be dealt with in an efficient and mutually-acceptable manner.

9. May 28, 1980 — Meeting with USAID mission composed of Mr. Loc Eckersley, Mr. Cary Coulter, and Mr. Samir Zoghby:

- Essentially a debriefing mission in which the consultant elaborated on his conclusion, summarized in a letter (Annex 7), it indicated that the only method to allow the project to meet its original objectives was to have an extension to make up for the initial delay in getting started. The mission expressed the feeling that it had originally had high hopes for the project, but was dismayed by the manner in which it was handled from a logistical point of view. While the mission could accept a limited role in supervising a project, it was not appreciative of the obligation to deal with a major administrative problem when it considered itself overloaded with other management matters which were being handled by an understaffed mission. In the context of the mission's current efforts to find a reasonable balance between its obligations and the staff available to supervise those obligations, the mission was not optimistic that it could concur with an extension of the project. It was suggested that for the future it would be wise for AID/W to design projects which are flexible with respect to possible variations in mission workloads over time. In general, it was also noted that delays in obtaining contractors in Upper Volta, or francophone Africa in general, was not unusual. If this was an AID/W procedural problem, it should be corrected. If this was more simply related to a limited supply of francophone U.S. technicians, then project design proposals should weigh this matter very carefully before entering into Project Agreements.

10. May 29, 1980 — Meeting with Mr. Sanoh (Secretary-General, Ministry of Rural Development), and Dr. Pare (UFRD Project Director):

- The consultant presented a brief review of his findings, and the Secretary-General concurred with its general results. While admitting the shortcomings on the GOUV side, he presented the hope that in future projects of this type clear and proper tripartite understandings would be carefully developed between USAID/U.V., AID/W and the GOUV; and subsequently maintained. Whatever may have been originally expected of the project, it was nevertheless felt that much had been learned by GOUV staff that was of long-term value. In that sense, the project was considered a good one.

ANNEX 2

COMPLETION OF PROJECT TASKS IDENTIFIED FOR THE PROJECT

Article D, Annex 1 of the Project Agreement specifies certain undertakings to be completed by the UFRD project during its lifetime. As recounted elsewhere (Annex 5), these were largely drawn from the report of the pre-design mission of April 1977. Therefore, and this is substantiated by the thrust of the DS/UD technical assistance mission of July 1978, they were not so much specific things to do as guideposts for implementing various steps of the project which, if generally applied, would lead to a meeting of project objectives. Thus the evaluation of whether or not the tasks were completed in accordance with the ProAg should not be done in a literal fashion. A looser approach has therefore been adopted in the earlier text of this report. Still, for the purposes of keeping a record of what was and what was not accomplished, the content of the ProAg is the only explicit reference point available. This annex therefore matches states' tasks against accomplishment of those tasks by the project. It serves as one of several inputs to the normative evaluation used by the consultant in determining whether the project objectives were met.

The first of these was the preparation of a definitive workplan; and was undertaken informally by the DS/UD mission of August 1978 and more formally during the first quarter of the contractor's arrival on station in 1979. It was agreed to by all parties concerned.

The second was a sequence of ten technical activities which was to serve as a guide to technical activities within the project in Upper Volta. The degree to which these ten activities were attempted is discussed, one by one, below.

- a. Inventory to be taken in each of the centers, exclusive of villages and hamlets, in order to determine the nature and extent of the services and functions it provides.

This was attempted and almost completed by the project. Unfortunately, little regard was paid to the qualifying phrase "exclusive of villages and hamlets" and the team, with DS/UD assistance, initiated its efforts by trying to gather information on 1,300 places. This was pared down to 108 places in both ORD's and finally to 44 for detailed study. In the last case the towns of Koudougou and Fada N'Gourma were deliberately left out. The word "unfortunate" has been used because completion of this task represented a massive effort and was not completed until January 1980; leaving two months for analysis and completion of other tasks. Part of the extraordinary requirement of time was the extreme detail to which the team worked in carrying out surveys of the 44 principal centers. As indicated in the Final Technical Report, things like numbers of desks in need of repair and numbers of tablets of quinine required by dispensaries would be jotted down (Annex 4).

- b. Centers in each ORD will be classified by locally meaningful functional definitions such as hamlets, villages, market towns, service centers and secondary cities. This typology will conform to function rather than size.

This task was attempted, and is documented in the contractor's final report. The conclusion was that hierarchical classification labels had little significance in the context of the ORD's studied. Scalograms provided the pertinent information. Thus, the final technical report does not dwell on the matter.

- c. Links between urban centers in the ORD and between these centers and external centers (i.e., Ouagadougou or Mamey) will be identified. This analysis includes physical linkages (roads, rails and ecological inter-

actions), economic linkages (capital and goods flows, marketing, production interdependencies, etc.), service delivery linkages (transportation, health, education and training, credit and financial networks, telecommunications, power, and professional or technical services), political or administrative linkages (budget flows, interjurisdictional transactions, etc.), and social linkages (visiting patterns, kinship patterns, etc.). These linkage will be reduced to a system of overlays to create a structural overview of the ORD. Except in a few matters, this task was not attempted. Subjects covered, though not treated comprehensively included conditions of roads, existence of rail lines, location of markets and the movement of sellers between them, the location of health and education facilities, location of jurisdictional services, and a few other things for the main centers looked at in the two ORDs. Strictly speaking, however, these were not linkage analyses. The reasons for not undertaking the task are several. First is the observation that linkage analysis was not clearly explained to the team, and thus survey questions never asked where, if unavailable locally, residents obtained certain goods and services. So the data for linkage analysis was not extensively gathered. Second, for the data that was available, the elimination of Koudougou, Fada, Ouagadougou, and Niamey from any extensive studies effectively removed the central places for links to be drawn to. Third, there was very little time left over after surveys to carry out analyses. Fourth, the mandatory requirement for drawing tables transparent sheets, associated equipment and a quick training course on how to make maps and overlays was not taken into consideration. Fifth, overshadowing all the previous projects, the project had departed on a path different from that set down in the ProAg and so the need for linkage analysis no longer seemed pertinent. This task, if taken literally, might have been overambitious, but evidence suggests that a great deal would still have been possible.

- d. To complete the picture, the area of influence of each urban center will be determined (e.g., by extent of market reach or other locally meaningful measures) and reduced to an overlay.

The final technical report does some of this in terms of market systems. The contractor's final report touches on the matter with respect to administrative matters. In general, though, the incompleteness of task c) dictated the non-completion of this one as well.

- e. Agricultural activity and potential of the region will be assessed (much of this information should be available from existing sources).

Review of available documents pertaining to the overall agricultural characteristics of each region were undertaken. In addition, some of the monographs for different centers would contain more specific information about localized agricultural characteristics. The fact that this sector is treated superficially in both final reports is due to the bias in favor of looking at public services, and is not reflective of the effort that went into the task.

- f. Using the foregoing (a - e) as baseline data, an analysis of urban-rural linkages critical to the support of rural and agricultural development in the ORD will be performed. This may be done by consulting existing models and by interviewing officials, technicians, extension workers and farmers in the ORD.

The project made the assumption, and it may be the correct one, that all urban functions are critical to rural development. Given the paucity of those functions, it may have been impossible to give priority to one over another. At the same time, adopting the model that it is best to improve what exists rather than worry about what does not, especially since farmers supported the

approach, health and education services were defined as the priority "linkages." This was rather easy a position to slip into since the project had never really comprehended the substance of relationships between urban functions and agriculture. At this point it might be useful to mention that the project missed an opportunity of learning about the relationship through contact with an MSU team working in the Fada ORD and which contained the expertise, however academic, of the relationship of concern.

- g. By comparing the model thus developed with the existing structure of the region derived from step a-e, weakness and gaps existing in urban services to rural development will be identified.

As noted in point f) above, this task was not undertaken with the exception of expressing the need for improved delivery of health, education and a few other services everywhere.

- h. These deficiencies will be translated into projects and programs which are given rough screening for economic feasibility.

The project identified a series of small works in general terms, and the need to develop a local fiscal capacity to manage works in the future. The final technical report also noted some projects for both ORD's. These latter, however, had little relationship to the study that was undertaken beforehand. In addition, note should be taken that from a technical point of view, even if everything had gone according to plan, projects might not have been identifiable all that easily. The UFRD method focusses on the spatial gaps in the supply of "functions." It does not look at the demand for the "functions," and hence one can only identify program possibilities. There may not be enough information to define a project worth evaluating for economic feasibility. So

perhaps this task was over ambitious in terms of what OFRD could reasonably be expected to produce.

- i. The resulting projects are to be put into the context of a planning framework for the ORD's by which the relative priority and timing for each project or category of projects can be estimated. The product of this step will be a development plan for the ORD's.

This was not fully accomplished. Also, as in the case of task h) above, the UFRD method is not by itself sufficient for a development It is one small input for a much larger set of sectoral analyses. So this task may have been over-ambitious as well.

- j. An evaluation system will be developed for project monitoring and implementing the results of the project.

This was not tried, and given the level of progress of the project, would no longer be useful to pursue.

The balance of tasks prescribed in the ProAg have to do with development of workshops and seminars to address various research, analysis and planning issues; and through which to communicate the purposes of the project to others within the Ministry, to other Ministries and to international agencies. While not exactly workshops or seminars, the team members did set up discussions at the ORD and at the local level and did attempt to tell those involved what the project was about. Later on it also discussed project possibilities with ORD and local officials. During this evaluation the consultant visited both ORD's and found that the officials there, just like the members of the project team, did not really understand what the purpose of UFRD was about. All of those contacted felt that UFRD was a pre-investment study of one sort or another, and that the projects defined

by it, the small works programs or the larger things proposed in the final technical report, would be financed by AID.

Major seminars were planned for early 1980, as parts of larger convocations being organized by the respective ORD's, but the participation of the team in them was later cancelled by the Ministry. Contacts with international agencies was sparse. The contractor tried to have substantive meetings with the USAID mission, but apparently the latter's staff was most often otherwise engaged. Some contacts were made with other international groups, but were not of a sustained sort. Contacts with other Ministries, at least of a semi-official nature in Ouagadougou were not undertaken until the very end of the project. In most respects the project was isolated from outside contacts in the capital, and very closely related at the local level. The degree of contact could have been better, especially in Ouagadougou, but in general the project tried to live up to this element of the ProAg without resorting to the formality of seminars and the like.

Observations

From the foregoing it is evident that the project attempted to deal with administrative and communication issues along the lines set out in the ProAg, and its performance can be deemed satisfactory. On technical matters things are much more uncertain. If the ten tasks identified in the ProAg are taken literally, then it is clear that the project did not get very far into the sequence of activities which in principle would have led to achievement of project objectives; or at least a testing of whether the application of the UFRD methodology, as given, could satisfy those objectives.

The reasons why the set of tasks were not undertaken are indicated in Annexes 4 and 5. The central question here is whether the situation in Upper Volta really necessitated such a wide departure from the sequence of technical activities set down in the ProAg.

Making allowances for the project's interest in exercising latitude in adapting technical activities to local circumstances, it appears to the consultant that much more could have and should have been done to conform to the general analytical orientation suggested by the tasks identified in the ProAg. Larger towns like Koudougou and Fada should have been included in the detailed inventory of centers; and the services identified there should have focussed on considerably more than health and education facilities. Some kind of substantive linkage analysis ought to have been performed, most especially because it is a critical step in the process of program identification. Similarly, delineation of areas of influence of major centers, based on a linkage analysis, would also have been a necessary technical activity.

In the end, an essential activity to identify projects through the UFRD approach would have made the analysis of critical urban-rural linkages mandatory. Perhaps it would not have been possible to go to the extreme of developing one or more development models, or of introducing even simple economic feasibility tests. But something resembling a logical sequence of analytical steps, however modified and simplified to suit Upper Volta, would have been necessary to keep the project within the relatively wide bounds defined in the concept of UFRD. As it is, the kinds of analyses which would have permitted the project to meet its objectives were not carried out as much as one would like to have seen.

Because the ProAg was never modified, either in terms of the tasks spelled out in it or in terms of its original stated objectives, and because the

execution of the project explicitly permitted deviations from the letter of the ProAg; it is now very difficult to evaluate the utility of the UFRD concept in Upper Volta as a means to assist the GOUV and AID efforts to promote the well-being of the poor.

ANNEX 3

THE FINAL PROJECT REPORT OF MAY 1980^{1/}

On March 24, 1980, slightly late with respect to the terms of project extension agreed to by USAID and the GOUV, the Voltaic project team consisting of Dr. E. Pare, Mr. J. Campaore, and Mr. R. Tindano submitted the completed Final Report of the project to this consultant. This is a separate document from the contractor's report and was prepared exclusively by the GOUV. The document was initiated after departure of the DS/UD Project Management Review mission of February-March 1980. It represents about two months of work and serves as one of several criteria for evaluating the degree to which the ProAg's objective of training Ministerial staff has been achieved.

The main report is 64 pages long and is attached to an 80-page annex containing selected monographs of 22 out of 44 urban centers, scalograms, questionnaires and maps of market areas. The organization of the main body of the text loosely follows suggestions put forward by the DS/UD mission of February 1980.

Part 1 of the report, "The Place of the Project in the National Development Strategy" (pp. 1-11), begins with a history of the project. It identifies the objectives of studying urban functions, preparing relevant plans and

^{1/}Rapport: Project Functions Urbaines dans le Developpement Rural, Direction de la Planification Rurale, de la Formation Professionnelle et des Ressources Humaines, Ministere du Developpement Rural, Haute Volta, Mai 1980.

projects and using these as vehicles for training personnel in regional development planning. This is followed by discussion of the tardiness in getting the project started (18 months late), the change in personnel including the appointment of Dr. Pare four months prior to the end of the project and the difficulty in understanding the meaning of the title "Urban Functions in Rural Development." A reasonable explanation of this last is nevertheless provided. The project is then integrated into the objectives of the national development plan (sectoral and spatial), and a brief overview of the methodologies involved are presented.

Part 2, "Data on the Distribution of Urban Functions" (pp. 12-32) provides a socio-economic overview of both ORD's, a typology of centers in both areas and an analysis of the results of the scalogram analysis. Part 3, "Results of the Analysis of 44 Centres and the Markets Study" (pp. 33-64), begins with an explanation of why the centers were selected for detailed examination and follows with a litany of the inadequacies of educational, health and other public facilities to be found in them. This is followed by a proposal for a small works program. A discussion of the markets study, with emphasis on the most important ones, is then presented. Projects are then identified for both ORD's. In the east these are the provision of a movie theatre, a departmental library, electricity and water supply systems in Fada; construction of nut oil extraction units in Fada and Bogande; and improvement of the Fada-Benin road. In the center-west ORD the projects are the electrification and supply of water to the towns of Reo and Yako and the construction of a bank at Ouessa. For all these ideas the need for further feasibility analyses are mentioned.

The text ends with a conclusion to the effect that the "Urban Functions" effort has opened doors to new ways of understanding many aspects of development. It is noted that although the project could have done much more had it not been for a late start and other problems, it was nonetheless a very useful beginning.

Observations

As a vehicle for presenting the major components and findings of the UFRD Project in Upper Volta, the Final Report is an excellent piece of work. It is clear and concise, relatively straightforward with respect to strengths and weaknesses of tasks undertaken, well-organized with respect to the set of outputs intended by the Project Agreement, comprehensive with regard to coverage of the things actually done and well-integrated into the concept of "Urban Functions in Rural Development." It is remarkable that so much could have been accomplished in terms of report preparation in so short a period of effort; seven weeks of data analysis, integration and synthesis, and about two weeks of writing, typing and printing. The document speaks very well of the technical capacity and motivation of the Voltaic team. The scope of its content, however, necessarily reflecting what was and what was not done by the project in terms of tasks originally envisaged (Annex 2), falls far short of what should have been possible both in terms of the circumstances of the country and the delays in getting the project started.

The reasons for this weakness are suggested elsewhere (Annexes 4 and 5). For present purposes it is important to note two things. First, the report presents data which is largely unaccompanied by a full analysis of that data; something which is understandable since the project did not get around to analysis until the very end (Annex 2). Thus the projects identified in the report, both the small works programs and the more substantial things presented at the end, while resulting from the process of implementing the project (*i.e.*, from discussions with local authorities, farmers, and the ORD's), largely do not result from technical planning analyses undertaken by the project of the types suggested in the ProAg. Whether this last would have been possible even under perfect circumstances is not known, but for the present the projects identified have to be regarded as extracts from a shopping list obtained from official and unofficial sources. They result from the process of executing the pro-

ject, but technically they do not correspond to what was hoped for in the UFRD project; even allowing for the possibility that had technical analyses been undertaken, the projects identified would be the same as those contained in the Final Report.

The second thing, maybe more important than the first, is that Dr. Pare who is Project Director has the equivalent of a Ph.D. (3rd Cycle) in economic geography from a university in France. Although the writing of the Final Report was shared by all members of the team, the organization and technical framework was developed by the Project Director. This poses the question of whether the excellent coverage by the report of what was actually done is more the result of Dr. Pare's previous training or more the result of the technical assistance provided by the project.

Extensive discussions with the team, singly and collectively, has suggested that the DS/UD technical assistance provided the key to learning about the utility of a "grass-roots" understanding of rural life, methods of direct and "snowball" socio-economic surveys, actual conditions of public facilities and services, characteristics of public servants in rural areas, and methods of putting together scalograms. Dr. Pare's previous training was the factor which appeared to provide the basis for understanding the spatial aspects of "functions," for interpreting scalograms and for analyzing the market study.

Be that as it may, the team did indicate a substantial appreciation of the collaboration of the contractor in the project and the things he guided them to learn about. They did express dismay that in respect to technical matters spelled out loosely in the ProAg, the contractor had apparently not been sufficiently guided or supported by DS/UD.

In the end, therefore, the report is a useful overview of the general characteristics of the two ORD's and the specific characteristics of

many urban functions located in their principal settlements; particularly with respect to public facilities and markets. It is not, however, the planning document originally envisaged.

ANNEX 4

THE CONTRACTOR'S FINAL REPORT OF MARCH 31, 1980^{1/}: THE SUBSTANCE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THE PROJECT FROM MARCH 1979 TO MARCH 1980

On completion of his contract, the contractor, Mr. Thomas Mead, submitted his final report to DS/UD. This 150-page document is separate from the final technical report of the project team, reviewed elsewhere, which was undertaken entirely by the Voltaic personnel. The interest of the contractor's report, besides its conveyance of substantive information about many circumstances of Upper Volta, is that it provides a good indication of the nature and direction of technical assistance provided to the project between March 1979 and March 1980 by the contractor and, through inference, by DS/UD.

1. The Report

The report is preceded by a Foreword which sets the philosophical stage for what follows. In brief, it suggests that development is a slow process and is based entirely on the initiatives and dynamics of local populations. Foreign or outside assistance should lend a hand to such

^{1/} This report's cover indicates joint authorship by Mr. Mead, the contractor, and the Voltaic team composed of Mr. Campaore, Dr. Pare and Mr. Tindano. The writing is Mr. Mead's, and the process involved review and comments upon early chapter drafts by the other team members. While it may reflect the sentiments of the entire team, the report is the contractor's alone.

spontaneous changes and not look for quick solutions to observed problems. Sensitivity to this "bottom up" approach is far superior to the use of calculators or other mechanistic means typical of contemporary assistance efforts. The implicit argument here, and which becomes explicit in later parts of the report, is that the UFRD approach, at least as expressed in the ProAg, is much too mechanical and "scientific" for the realities of Upper Volta; or of Africa in general.

"History of the Project" (pp. 1-6) reviews the various tasks undertaken through the life of the project. It mentions that such administrative problems as did occur were relatively minor (notwithstanding the strong reaction of the USAID mission to one of the problems) and did not impair the progress of the work once it got started. It is also argued that technical difficulties were not important because project staff decided at an early stage that "the regular methodologies and processes of urban development planning ... are not really appropriate in ... Upper Volta" (p. 5). Similarly, the title of "urban functions" was misleading, and the contractor suggests that the proper title should have been "local government functions in rural development."

"The Regions" (pp.7-19) describes the 2 ORD's where the project carried out its work. It discusses the administrative organization of both areas, the public personnel assigned to them, the roads, the public services, the existence of dynamic communities, agricultural and rural activities, etc. The conclusion at this point is that the people are poor, there is a correspondingly weak tax base, and hence such public services as are provided are invariably poorly equipped, maintained and supplied. The implicit theme here, made explicit in subsequent chapters, is that there might be little point in thinking of providing new public facilities and services when a country can hardly support the operation of existing

ones. By inference, the effort should aim at upgrading what is and not worry about what is not yet on the ground.

"The Villages and the Cantons" (pp. 20-30) describes the physical, hierarchical and social organization of settlements in the two ORD's. It notes that villages are really dispersed family compounds which in no way resemble preconceived notions of what an occidental village ought to look like. Depending on the season, the population of villages can range from, say, 2,000 to 8,000 people; and so population hierarchies tend to be misleading. Out of this examination it is suggested that the village or town is not a useful unit of space or population for purposes of a UFRD project; but rather the cantons which exist in manageable numbers, which have traditional lineages, which are viable administrative units, and within which populations spontaneously feel at home and recognize each other. The suggestion is that for purposes of planning and analysis in a place like Upper Volta the bottom end of a settlement hierarchy should not be the village but rather the broader area containing many affiliated villages; and that centers for such areas, in this case cantons, should not be so much based on physical availability of "functions" as on perceived importance in terms of socio-cultural and administrative factors.

"Regional Centers and Sub-Centers" (pp. 31-40) introduces the important towns of each ORD and indicates that only Koudougou and Fada merit the designation of "regional center;" with the former being a much closer approximation of the concept than the latter. Several other large towns are mentioned, but the bulk of places are generally considered to be villages of the kinds described in the previous chapter. Various hierarchical nomenclatures for the settlements are suggested, but in the end they are implied to be not all that illuminating or useful since all places except Koudougou and Fada were in need of improved water

supply, better access roads, equipped medical and educational services, effective extension services, credit, marketing facilities, postal services, market sheds, crop processing units; i.e., everything. There is, however, a hesitation of making specific suggestions because, as mentioned above, Upper Volta really cannot afford them right now.

"The State of Rural Services" (pp. 41-78) reviews the results of the village questionnaires carried out by the project. The topics center on water supply, roads, administrative facilities, schools, dispensaries, maternity clinics, postal services and public employees like extension agents, prefects, etc. The observations include the need for better housing for public servants, especially those at the "grass roots" level, improved public services and the need for distractions other than alcohol.

"Markets" (pp. 79-105) discusses the results of the markets study undertaken by SAED in January-February 1980. The purpose and methodology is explained, together with a note describing the reasons collaboration could not be obtained with the MSU team operating in the Fada ORD (the latter's requirements were much more complex). The important markets in terms of size and area coverage are identified, together with unique features at several of the markets looked at. The conclusion is that trade is manifested through complex flows in each region, but the surveys did not produce sufficient information to structure the flows. It is argued that, in any case, the practical use of spelling out those patterns is in doubt. There is no call for establishment of new markets, though physical facilities at existing markets are in need of repair. On the margin, it is suggested that certain road improvements might act to stimulate and expand certain markets in the Fada ORD. A major recommendation is the institution of market fees to generate local revenues which could finance community facilities and services.

"Problems of Maintenance and Operation" (pp. 106-122) defines the problem of maintaining public facilities as a question of the absence of men and money to do it. It proceeds to discuss the qualifications and availability of artisans to carry out such works, and the availability of local funds to pay them and acquire materials. After stressing the over-centralization of national budget revenues, the discussion shifts to the question of local derivation of taxes and the reconstitution of a head tax abandoned some years earlier. The question, however, is made more specific in the sense that what is at issue is not "self help" in the construction of new facilities, but rather such methods in the maintenance and operation of the facilities once they are built. The recommendation is that community-based maintenance programs should be promoted.

"Other Programs: Foreign and International Aid" (pp. 123-132) is a review, and to some extent a critique, of some ongoing and projected internationally-sponsored programs in each ORD. A positive view of Partnership for Productivity (PFP) efforts is made for the Fada ORD, and the desire for collaboration in a small works program is expressed. At the same time, dissatisfaction is expressed with the (erroneous) idea that if a small works program were to have been undertaken, it would have been the responsibility of PFP only. The argument voiced is that planners (i.e., the UFRD staff) need the opportunity to practice rural development as well as study it. In the end it is mentioned that copies of the final report of the project would be circulated to all donor agencies with a view to obtaining support for small works which would have as its basic purpose the creation of viable local institutions to maintain public facilities and services.

"Findings and Recommendations" (pp. 133-143) summarizes what has gone before. It stresses the general need for water supplies, roads, primary schools, health facilities, extension and credit services; and the proper maintenance and operation of them. It cautions against new facilities,

however, and stresses improvement of the existing. For expanded service it is suggested that mobility be promoted from existing facilities through provision of motor scooters, gasoline and improved road maintenance for existing personnel. In addition the creation of local governments in places where central authority is absent is stressed; and in particular the creation of local fiscal resources through reconstitution of a head tax, market fees, etc.

To be more specific, the small rural works program is recommended to: bridge the gap between studies and major investment projects, fulfill respondent expectations generated by the project, train Voltaic team members in implementation, test methods of inspiring local public participation; and a list of possible works is presented. It is then suggested that locations for such works be those areas where there is already a dynamic sense of local responsibility and willingness to undertake maintenance obligations; and a list of places if provided.

The substance of the contractor's report is without question of considerable merit in describing the baseline of what much of rural development is really all about in places like Upper Volta. It reflects considerable experience, a lot of hard and extensive fieldwork in the country, a rare degree of sensitivity to detail and to the aspirations of rural people, and a respect for what people can do on their own without being browbeaten by outside assistance. To the extent that these attributes were conveyed to the Voltaic team while working together on the UFRD project, and observations by this consultant seem to suggest they they have, then the contractor has made a significant contribution to the qualifications of his counterparts in the Planning Cell of the Ministry of Rural Development.

For purposes of this final evaluation, however, the question is to what extent has the technical assistance, as manifested in the report, conformed to the general goals and objectives of the Project Agreement; the question of whether the project has conformed to the letter of the ProAg having been discussed elsewhere (Annex 2). This is not an easy question to answer because it is difficult to make a distinction between the spirit of the ProAg and the intent of DS/UD which effectively set up the document, sponsored the project and monitored its progress.

2. Monitoring of the Contractor's Activities

Going back to the short-term technical assistance mission of August 1978, it can be noted that DS/UD initiated its efforts with the project by setting up what were apparently two modes of operation (Annex 5). One was the effort and report of Mr. Perry which pursued a quantitative planning methodology theme and which corresponded to a specified task in the ProAg.^{1/} The other was the effort and report of Mr. Southall which, among other things, introduced the importance of dealing with issues like decentralization, a "grass roots" approach and local government in the project.^{2/} This report was apparently well-received by DS/UD.^{3/} So some of the directions which the contractor would later pursue, though not contained specifically in the ProAg, were being developed for DS/UD early in the project.

^{1/} UFRD in Upper Volta, Report of a Field Visit by Edward C. Perry, DS/UD, September 5, 1978.

^{2/} UFRD: Report on a Visit to Upper Volta, Aiden Southall (Consultant), August 1978.

^{3/} Letter from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Thomas Luche (USAID/UV), September 26, 1978.

Soon after the contractor arrived on station in March 1979, he let it be known to DS/UD that the ProAg's explicitly stated methodology could not be applied directly to Upper Volta, in particular with regard to selection of sites for detailed analysis and development of projects. He argued that since "functions" were for all intents and purposes non-existent, they could not be used as selection criteria. Things like road accessibility, availability of water, and markets offered more promise.^{1/} To this suggestion that many of the specifics of the ProAg be left aside, DS/UD responded that it had no problem with the approach suggested, that the notion of doing studies in selected areas rather than more quantitative or more graphic analyses seemed to make sense under the circumstances, and that the contractor should not be overly concerned with approved methodologies. He was encouraged to make of such methodologies what he could in the context of Upper Volta and to innovate and improvise as necessary.^{2/}

The contractor's first quarterly report elaborated further on the question of the appropriateness of highly technical methods, suggested that "urban functions" were more aptly described as "local government functions," and argued that what ought to be done is improve public facilities (e.g. schools and dispensaries), perhaps through introduction of local taxation.^{3/} DS/UD's response to the quarterly report was positive and reiterated that if the project team felt that the suggested methodology was unacceptable, it was free to make modifications as necessary; the purpose of the project being

^{1/} Letter from Thomas Mead (Contractor) to Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD), April 1979.

^{2/} Letter from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Thomas Mead (Contractor), May 18, 1979.

^{3/} UFRD Quarterly Report of March-June 1979.

to adapt techniques to local conditions.^{1/} DS/UD did, however, express concern about local government and local taxation issues. The contractor responded that although interested in the two related subjects, he recognized that it was not part of the project and that he would be making a mistake to make UFRD hang upon it. Whatever the form of UFRD, he insisted, was that concern with maintenance was of as much importance as the construction of facilities.^{2/}

Also, in a separate response to the contractor's cover letter for the quarterly report, DS/UD expressed puzzlement about the former's reference to the project's going into action the following year. There was uncertainty regarding whether this meant implementation of the UFRD study, or the projects to be identified by the study.^{3/} Correspondence in later months indicated that the contractor's reference was to an implementation phase subsequent to the study but in part using unexpended funds within the project budget.^{4/} So part of the contractor's effort during the second quarter was to lead the team in very detailed analyses of equipment and supplies required by schools, dispensaries and other facilities, and the repair and reconstruction needed by those facilities in various towns and villages. It was a kind of pre-expenditure inventory emanating from the contractor's previously expressed concern with maintenance and operation of existing public services; which doubled as a partial satisfaction of

^{1/} Letter from Ed Perry (DS/UD) to Thomas Mead (Contractor), June 27, 1979.

^{2/} Letter from Thomas Mead (Contractor) to Ed Perry (DS/UD), July 18, 1979.

^{3/} Letter from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Thomas Mead (Contractor), July 23, 1979.

^{4/} Letter from Thomas Mead (Contractor) to Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD), December 27, 1979.

the requirement that the project undertake analyses of "urban functions." No communication during the second quarter indicated that DS/UD was concerned about this trend.

The next substantive set of DS/UD comments concerning the project were documented during the mid-term evaluation mission of October 1979. At that time the DS/UD mission spend much of its time dealing with administrative problems, yet it still made a number of comments about the technical progress of the project. It noted that technical and substantive progress was good, that the contractor was doing an "outstanding" job, that the project would finish several months ahead of schedule (in March 1980), that it was fulfilling the conceptual and technical expectations of major interest to DS/UD and that budgetary savings could and should be used for a demonstration implementation phase.^{1/} For the benefit of the USAID mission, DS/UD reiterated that the objectives of the project were to: (1) examine centers in the two ORD's; (2) determine which are most important to rural development; (3) identify deficiencies in the services these towns offer; and (4) recommend specific projects and programs to help overcome the deficiencies. The evaluation mission report echoed these sentiments and identified a work program which included completion of ongoing detailed studies, initiation of market studies, preparation of mapping exercises, selection of projects (e.g. storage facilities, credit, agricultural input marketing, health and education services, etc.), completion of a long-range plan and continuation of informal training sessions. The only technical problem noted was the absence of development models for the two regions.^{2/}

^{1/} Memorandum from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Richard Meyer (USAID/UV), October 2, 1979.

^{2/} Mid-Term Evaluation Report, DS/UD, October 17, 1979.

This might, in retrospect, be considered a fair assessment of progress since the project team assured the evaluation mission that the work program described could readily be accomplished.

Shortly after departure of the evaluation mission, DS/UD communicated to the USAID mission that the question of a follow-on implementation phase would be held in abeyance until the end of the project.^{1/} Whether this was communicated to the contractor at the time is not known, but early in the new year DS/UD suggested to him that the small works program should not preoccupy the team since this was a matter to be discussed with the mission, since other tasks were of more import for the moment and since certain tasks like the markets study appeared to be moving too slowly.^{2/}

A Project Management Review mission comprising a consultant and DS/UD arrived in late February 1980. This was originally intended as a final evaluation mission but was changed when the visitors discovered that there was little upon which to base an evaluation; progress in preparation of the final report not yet having been made.^{3/} The principal problems noted by the consultant at this time were that the four explicit objectives defined by the project were not being met along the general lines anticipated by the ProAg, that time had almost run out, and that although, strictly speaking, the original conception of the project had been adhered to, it had shown a tendency to "drift" into something other than UFRD. This last was based on a reading of certain completed portions of the contractor's final report, a reading of some detailed town studies and extensive dis-

^{1/} Letter from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Samir Zoghby, November 15, 1979.

^{2/} Letter from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Thomas Mead, January 30, 1980.

^{3/} Report of the Project Management Review of the UFRD Project in Upper Volta, by Simon Fass (Consultant), Practical Concepts Incorporated, March 12, 1980.

cussions with the project team. The consultant's opinion on the status of the project was concurred to by DS/UD during the mission.^{1/},^{2/} It was during this visit that the contractor was asked to complete his report along the lines he had envisaged before arrival of the mission; the Final Technical Report of the project being left in the hands of the Voltaic team members.

3. Observations

In a letter prepared just prior to his departure from Upper Volta, the contractor wrote: "My position is that what we did here was sensible and practical, appropriate to the facts of life in Upper Volta, even if it did not respond to the accepted academic criteria and approved methodologies."^{3/} The issue for the moment is whether these criteria and methodologies represented the spirit of the ProAg. Had DS/UD not made so clear and so decisive a set of reorienting decisions during the Project Management Review then one might have deduced that the spirit was not violated and that the technical assistance provided by the contractor was within reasonable bounds of what was expected. One would have simultaneously had to deduce that the ProAg was not a really good indicator of what DS/UD had had in mind, and was useful only as a point

^{1/} Memo from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Samir Aoghby (USAID/UV), February 27, 1980.

^{2/} Letter from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Loc Eckerseley (USAID/UV), April 1, 1980.

^{3/} Letter from Thomas Mead (Contractor) to Loc Eckerseley (USAID/UV), March 11, 1980.

of departure. In this case there would have been no point to a final evaluation, USAID guidelines insisting that evaluations take stock of explicit statements at the beginning of projects in order to appraise their progress at the end.

But DS/UD's decisions in February-March 1980 were decisive, and although it might have been very useful to modify the ProAg somewhat, it was evident that even with such changes the project was not conforming to what was expected. The fact remained that the purpose of the project was to enhance the technical capacities of the Ministry for planning methodologies through practical application of integrated urban-rural planning methods and through the preparation of a practical development plan for strengthening urban centers in the two ORD's.

While it may have been perfectly plausible for this purpose to be largely irrelevant with respect to rural development in Upper Volta, it would nevertheless have been necessary to prove it by trying the methods out, adapting them as necessary, and then judging the merits of the output against better sense. It was not intended that the methods, academic or otherwise, be abandoned early in the project to deal with issues deemed more appropriate; like "local government functions," which was reintroduced in the end after having been presumably dispensed with early on.

The contractor did do things like try to develop hierarchies of towns with the team, did execute scalograms and necessary surveys and did identify projects of a sort (i.e., the small works program); but that was not enough. The very clear observation, therefore, is that the technical assistance provided by the project from March 1979 to March 1980 was much less than had been expected and much less than would have been possible in Upper Volta had DS/UD been more effective in monitoring and guiding the activities of the contractor with an eye firmly cast on the existing ProAg or any hypothetical modification of it.

ANNEX 5

THE EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The first step in developing the project was a pre-design visit by DS/UD (then TA/UD) in March-April 1977. Strictly speaking it was not a technical assistance activity, but to the extent that it provided the technical framework and guidelines for the project, it is useful to think of it as such.

The documentation resulting from this visit contained the original project proposal.^{1/} One important activity was that of site selection, and the criteria used for that purpose were: substantial areas of high and low population density, a well-defined system of urban centers, a reasonable degree of rural development potential, and considerable programmatic involvement on the part of the local USAID mission. The satisfaction of all the criteria required the selection of two ORD's; Fada and Koudougou. The latter area satisfied the first three criteria, but unfortunately was not subject to USAID activity. The former was subject to extensive planned AID activity, but was not as interesting from a technical point of view. This set a difficult stage where the ORD with greater potential in terms of project output would be of little direct use to the mission, and the ORD with greater potential in terms of possible implementation by AID was less subject to useful analysis by a UFRD-type

^{1/} Urban Functions in Rural Development in Upper Volta, by Eric Chetwynd, Jr. and Benjamin B. Hawley, Office of Urban Development, Bureau for Technical Assistance, USAID, Washington, April 25, 1977.

project. Nevertheless, it was argued that models developed from the Koudougou area analysis would be helpful in developing a plan for Fada. Note should also be taken that the activities of Michigan State University and Partnership for Productivity in the Fada ORD were noted at this time, and the utility of complementarity and interchange of information was emphasized.

The same visit also outlined the content of the UFRD output, and specified that after two years the product would be a planning framework for strengthening the contributions of urban centers to rural development, and a corresponding list of priority projects addressed to that purpose. Technical training of a local team would be obtained through the execution of the tasks leading to the formulation of the final products.

Although the methodological approach and hence the tasks to be performed were left open for development in, and adaptation to, the conditions of Upper Volta, a list of ten tasks was set down in the report of April 25, 1977 as an "illustrative scenario" of things to be accomplished.

Finally, the pre-design visit discussed the institutional framework for the project. In principle there was a range of choice which included the Ministry of Planning, the Directorate of Urbanism (Ministry of Public Works) and the Ministry of Rural Development. The Ministry of Rural Development was selected because at the time it was the only public agency with substantive decentralized units at the ORD level and which were closely tied to local populations and their administrative representatives; and because it was already bringing some urban-based services closer to the individual farmer. Though not documented in the report, it is also understood that the choice was to some extent predicated on the fact that basic USAID activities were already tied closely to the Rural Development Ministry and so there was some mutuality of opinion between the mission and the GOUV on this matter.

The DS/UD pre-design team nonetheless documented a reservation to the effect that the Ministry had an operational mandate in the sphere of agricultural production rather than in planning and research; that the Ministry was already stretched thin across its various responsibilities; and that many "urban functions" were the responsibilities of other Ministries. The implication was that another Ministry, perhaps Planning, would have been better suited for housing the project. In any case the report cited the need for inter-ministerial cooperation and involvement to overcome the limitations of the institutional selection.

The Project Grant Agreement (PrcAg) was then negotiated, prepared and eventually signed on August 31, 1977. During this period the development of the ProAg was greatly assisted by USAID mission personnel, and demonstrated a substantial interest on the part of the mission in having the project take place. The Project Assistance Completion Date was set for March 31, 1980, and was expected to be around January 1978.

Processing of the project in Washington caused extensive delays and made it impossible for a U.S. contractor to arrive in Upper Volta within a reasonable period. Indeed, he did not arrive until March 1979. The causes were several. It took from November 1977 to January 1978 to clear Small Business, from January to May 1978 to issue an RFP because of changes in contract staff and delay in GC, and from August 1978 to January 1979 to select a contractor because of delays on legal matters.^{1/} Processing activities taking a year or more were not unknown in Upper Volta, but were unusual in DS/UD-related operations.^{2/}

^{1/} Mid-Term Evaluation of UFRD in Upper Volta, Eric Chetwynd and Edward Perry, DS/UD, October 17, 1979.

^{2/} Letter from Rebecca Niec, Liaison Person for UFRD Project (USAID/UV) to Alan Fiske, Peace Corps Director, U.V., July 20, 1977.

The decision was taken in June 1978 to therefore initiate the project without a contractor since the GOUV's personnel and facilities had already been put in place and were becoming anxious to get the project underway. Technical assistance from DS/UD would therefore comprise short-term advisors until a contractor could be found. The first of these was a visit by Eric Chetwynd of DS/UD during the week of July 21-28, 1978. The period was spent helping the team to more clearly define project objectives, to identify activities to be started immediately, to outline in more detail the analytical steps spelled out in the ProAg and to resolve administrative and budgetary issues with USAID in Upper Volta.^{1/}

During the visit it was found that the ORD directors were dissatisfied at having been excluded from the initial project design. They also indicated that their concurrence with the project was based on the assumption that the project would, in the end, identify specific projects and prepare them for submission to funding agencies. DS/UD assured them at the time that if the studies did not produce such projects, the effort would have been considered a failure by AID. On this basis the ORD's agreed to provide working space for team visits and part-time statistical, planning and secretarial services.

In addition, conditions concerning activities of the project were discussed and agreed to. This was done to avoid mistakes and problems which were learned about in the Philippines. The conditions included use of selectivity in data collection, maximization of use of existing data, minimization of complex data analyses and careful collaboration of all parties concerned. An immediate work program was then outlined. At this time also it was

^{1/} UFRD in Upper Volta, Report of a Field Visit, Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD), August 2, 1978.

suggested that the project be composed of two phases. The first phase would involve hierarchy analysis and assessment of agricultural potential. The second would begin with development of one or more models against which the ORD spatial structures could be compared.

This visit was followed shortly thereafter by a more substantive mission between August 7th and September 5th, 1978, by Dr. Aiden Southall^{1/} and Mr. Edward Perry.^{2/} During this one-month period activities were concentrated on working together with GOUV staff appointed to the project in surveying and classifying centers and services in the two ORD's, assembling descriptive statistics within the ORD's, collecting population data and identifying activities which could be continued or initiated prior to the arrival of a contractor. These technical aspects were largely implemented by Mr. Perry. Dr. Southall's contribution consisted more of a socio-political overview of rural development and the project, and focussed more on the need to deal with decentralization, "grass roots" orientations and local government.

The mission's technical contribution was to initiate a functional complexity analysis, the assemblage of descriptive statistics, the collection of population data and the preparation of a work plan which included completion of the three tasks described plus collection of maps, collection of secondary documents and a listing of organizations whose cooperation would be needed to an "implementation" phase, and for certain technical analyses. With respect to this last, it was noted that actual contact with other organizations should await arrival of the full-time contractor.

^{1/} UFRD, Report on a Visit to Upper Volta, Aiden Southall (Consultant), August 1978.

^{2/} Urban Functions in Rural Development in Upper Volta, Report of a Field Visit by Edward C. Perry, DS/UD, September 5, 1978.

Upon return to Washington Mr. Perry prepared an annexed document entitled "A Preliminary Survey of Centers and Services in the Koudougou ORD" and which was forwarded to the project team. It provided an overview of the theory of central places and regional planning and an application to the Koudougou ORD. The conclusions were, on the basis of surveys undertaken of 433 settlements of the ORD's total of 679, that about 90 had urban functions worthy of mention, that 11 or so of the 90 were significant, and that only three of the 11 -- Koudougou, Yako and Leo -- could be effectively construed as "urban centers." Though not stated as such, the implication may have been that further study focus on the approximately 11 important places rather than on the larger set.

After departure of this mission in September 1978, the local team proceeded to establish necessary contacts at the ORD and local levels, gathered secondary data available at the ORD's and the Ministry, and attempted to complete scalograms and other technical activities suggested by the mission. With respect to this last, however, progress was slow. This has been explained to the consultant as arising from the fact that the project director could not provide more than 5% to 10% of his time to the project due to other obligations and activities. It has also been explained as the result of lack of "formative" contact between the mission and Voltaic team members during the DS/UD visit of August-September 1978. The argument has been made that too much effort was placed by the visitors in carrying out the tasks set forth in the ProAg and insufficient attention was paid to training the local technicians in how to analyze the data. The period was characterized as one in which the visitors and the team carried out surveys in the field, after which the visitors disappeared to their hotel and thence to Washington to analyze the information and present the results and a written "how-to" memorandum afterwards. To whatever extent this was actually the case, the point was that the local staff were technically incapable of understanding how to proceed further in the required tasks. Indeed, based on discussions

with this consultant in February 1980, the team still appeared to not understand the logic and utility of the activities of August 1978.

For all intents and purposes, therefore, the project really began in earnest in March 1979 with the arrival of the full-time U.S. contractor; there having been no interim short-term assistance between September 1978 and March 1979. Thus the two-year project was already one year late, with one year to go.

Upon arrival of the contractor, accompanied by Mr. Perry, a work program through March 1980 was prepared. A revision of the questionnaire undertaken the previous August was printed up, and the survey was carried out in the Fada ORD and again in the Koudougou region. The technical work was essentially starting over again.

Even at this early stage of intensified technical assistance, questions were being raised by the contractor as to the utility of further investigating "urban functions" through a highly technical methodology (presumably as set forth in the ProAg); the argument apparently stemming from the observation that almost every town and village surveyed needed something, and that certain normative criteria like dynamic community leadership was more significant than some of the mechanistic criteria defined in texts of economic geography. This suggested change in method apparently corresponded to the UFRD's purpose of adapting theory to the realities of Upper Volta. At the same time, however, although noting that the ultimate aim of the project was to identify basic input services to agriculture (which presumably include public and private economic goods and services), the contractor was suggesting that urban functions were really local government functions in the areas of water, roads, health facilities, educational facilities, etc.; and that emphasis should be placed on expanding and improving the quality of such services in established settlements. While making this first

foray, the contractor did nevertheless mention that local government was outside the scope of the UFRD study.^{1/}

During the second quarter of the contractor's stay, the village questionnaires were completed, covering about 1,300 such places with more detailed studies of 108 centers in both ORD's being terminated at the same time.^{2/} The process of selecting about 22 centers in each ORD was initiated, and very detailed studies were commenced for them. These latter studies focussed on the status of whatever public services could be found, including for the most part the physical conditions, equipment and personnel of schools, dispensaries and maternity clinics. These studies were taken to extreme detail, and often documented the number of desks in need of repair, the number of quinine tablets a dispensary was short of, etc.; as indicated in individual monographs prepared for each place and appended to the Final Report.^{3/} Monographs for Koudougou and Fada towns were not prepared at this time because the places were deemed to have more than sufficient qualities of services relative to other places in each ORD.

At this time also the team attempted to devise a hierarchial classification of centers, but concluded that the exercise had little utility. It also looked for socio-cultural documents to underlie the study, but found little

^{1/} UFRD Quarterly Report of March-June 1979.

^{2/} UFRD Quarterly Report of June-September 1979.

^{3/} As suggested in Annex , this level of detail may have stemmed from an interest in making an inventory of all things which might be required for the hoped-for implementation of a small-works program. The program may have been the team's interpretation of its mandate with respect to identifying implementable projects.

of use. The practicalities of developing sophisticated mapping techniques were found insurmountable and the decision was made not to expend too much effort on map-making. As for forward planning within the project, the notion presented by the contractor in his first quarter report was rapidly becoming an explicit component of the project's purpose and during the second quarter the emphasis was being placed on coming up with a list of practical projects for early implementation; with a view to renovation and management of the existing facilities found in towns. Examination of correspondence between DS/UD and the contractor during and after this quarter did not reveal concern with the direction in which the project was heading (Annex 4).

In this quarter, too, administrative difficulties arose with respect to the purchase of a car by the project without prior approval by the USAID mission. The mission, which had had little or no substantive contact with the project since the contractor's arrival, reacted strongly and cut off project funds from July 1, thus stopping project activities for a short period. The mission also cabled for the dispatch of DS/UD personnel to come to Upper Volta, without specifying the nature of the problem.

DS/UD personnel arrived in October 1979 to perform a mid-term evaluation, but were apparently unable to be more effective in this area since most time was occupied in "putting out fires" and keeping the project from being cancelled. Thus, less time was given over to in-depth technical evaluation of the project; except perhaps for the idea of using the balance of unexpended funds in the project for an "implementation" phase -- the idea for which was originally proposed in September 1978 and indirectly alluded to by the contractor after his arrival.^{1/}

^{1/} Mid-Term Evaluation Report, October 17, 1979.

During the third quarter, after the administrative difficulties were resolved, the project continued along the course set earlier with a change in the project's Directorship; an individual recruited earlier as a technician, after having left the project before the contractor's arrival, returning to take the post on December 1st.^{1/} It was felt that studies of all selected towns would be completed by the date of January 15, 1980 and it was suggested that the project's conclusions would be the need for maintenance and operation of existing facilities in the towns to be financed by local populations. The tasks proposed for the quarter included several large-scale workshops as suggested by the DS/UD mid-term evaluation and specified in the ProAg, sub-contracting of map-making activities,^{2/} sub-contracting of a market study, preparation of a small rural development works program (or micro-projects), and the undertaking of discussions with other agencies (foreign and local) concerning their own plans and programs in the ORD's concerned.

Other than his final report, reviewed in Annex 4, the last document prepared by the contractor was a report concerning the proposal for the small rural works program.^{3/} It argued that the need for a second planning phase in the project, as specified in the ProAg and by DS/UD in July 1978 was dubious; Upper Volta having received more than enough plans and not enough concrete actions to exploit the studies. The idea, concurred to by the project team, was to use about \$100,000 in unexpended funds for

^{1/} UFRD Quarterly Report of September-December 1979.

^{2/} The map-making contract, worth about \$400, consisted of the production of one general map for each ORD, which is appended to the Final Technical Report.

^{3/} Proposal for a Works Program, April 1980-March 1981, dated December 27, 1979.

this purpose. A budget was worked out as well as a typology of micro-projects; the location for them and their exact nature to await an approval expected at some point before the project completion date of March 31, 1980.

The final form of technical assistance arrived in February 1980, and was supposed to have been a final evaluation of the project. Unfortunately the DS/UD mission found that there was little to evaluate in terms of the stated goals and objectives of the project as set forth in the ProAg.^{1/} The evaluation mission was therefore converted into a project management review.

What the mission found was that the bulk of project effort had been dedicated to data gathering; the town studies not being completed until January 1980 and the market study raw data only having just been received. The workshops scheduled for the quarter had not taken place, the mapping sub-contract had provided only two maps, contacts with other agencies had only been undertaken marginally. The project was, in 1980, where it should theoretically have been in 1979. The team was expecting the DS/UD mission to be instrumental in negotiating the "implementation" phase with the local USAID personnel, and had assumed that the technical analysis portion of the project was more or less complete.

The exception was the Project Director, on board for two and a half months at the time, who expressed his dissatisfaction with the progress and content of the UFRD project, and stated that the project had been "biased" and in only a marginal way resembled what he thought it was supposed to be and what the ProAg seemed to suggest it would be. He disclaimed responsibility

^{1/} Report of the Project Management Review of the UFRD Project in Upper Volta, by Simon M. Fass, Consultant (Practical Concepts Incorporated), March 12, 1980.

for the final outcome, suggesting his unwillingness to reorient a project which had been basically directed by the DS/UD contractor and which, by implication, meant the project's substance had the concurrence of DS/UD (Annex 4).

During this mission, therefore, and on the basis of the Project Director's feeling that much could still be done with existing materials to provide a document responsive to the objectives of the ProAg,^{1/} DS/UD arranged an extension of the project with the GOUV and the USAID mission to June 9, 1980; with a proviso that the final technical report be completed by May 14, 1980. This extension, besides giving the project an opportunity to meet its basic objectives and thus provide something which could be evaluated for DS/UD, was agreed to by the USAID mission in order to have something tangible in hand and upon which the mission could later decide on the merits of a further extension to make up for the loss of time early in the project. Such a possible extension, it may be noted, would have had to depend on the permanence of the Voltaic team and its Project Director, and the availability of a mission staff member to dedicate supervisory time to the project.

At this time it was also agreed that the small works program, never part of the ProAg and objected to by the USAID mission on that and administrative grounds, was abandoned. The Voltaic team, under technical guidance from the Project Director, would proceed to prepare a final technical report in the style of a planning document for the two ORD's; and to this end DS/UD provided such technical advice as time would permit.^{2/} In addition,

^{1/} Memo from Eric Chetwynd (DS/UD) to Samir Zoghby (USAID/UV), February 28, 1980.

^{2/} Report of the Project Management Review of the UFRD Project in Upper Volta, March 12, 1980.

USAID indicated that it would try to provide such technical support as it could arrange with its own staff in Ouagadougou.^{1/}

Observation

The chronology of the project, which also doubles as an overview of the substantive technical assistance provided to it (with more detail provided in Annex 4), is a brief overview of the history leading up to the final evaluation of May 1980. The issues which created key problems during the projects life appear to include:

- a. The process of obtaining a contractor was overly long, causing anxieties on the part of the GOUV, the USAID mission and DS/UD;
- b. The short-term technical assistance provided to the project in the summer of 1978 was too preoccupied with actually getting something done rather than with training the Voltaic staff on how to do it, or on the meaning of URFD;
- c. The contractor's arrival within one year of the project's official termination date was not accompanied by either an immediate effort to extend it nor an overhaul of the terms of the ProAg (i.e., in the form of a work program) to account for the reduction in analytical time;

^{1/} Upon arrival of the consultant for the final evaluation on May 14, 1980, it was learned that the final technical report was not completed. This occurred on May 24th. Also, USAID mission staff had not found the time to assist the Project in technical matters, as had originally been proposed by the mission at the conclusion of the management review.

- d. The contractor's activities and technical assistance efforts were not monitored with a view to the existing ProAg or to the ultimate requirements of a final evaluation;
- e. The GOUV's selection for initial Project Director proved unwise due to the latter's lack of time for project participation and lack of adequate concern about accepted AID administrative and financial procedures, thus creating a poor working relationship between the project and an overburdened USAID mission staff;
- f. Substantive communication between the project and the mission (related to point (e) above), was less than optimal, as was contact between the mission and DS/UD; and
- g. The project management review of February 1980 came too late to significantly correct the preceding problems.

Retroactive critiques are for present purposes pointless. Suffice it to say that in order to benefit from hindsight it is important to take stock of what has gone before in order to avoid falling into similar circumstances in the future. The lesson here is that an apparently small and simple technical assistance project is not without its degree of complexity from a management point of view. Sensitivity to a lot of little things as a project evolves, both of a technical and administrative nature, is essential. One really must "keep on top" of these kinds of activities all the time, and one must never lose sight of the explicit intentions of the Project Agreement which define what the activities should or should not be. In short, monitor the implementation of a project carefully and, while doing this, keep in mind the procedures which are to be used to evaluate it at the end.

ANNEX 6

EXECUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLABORATING PARTIES

Article C, Annex 1 of the Project Agreement provides for the execution of certain responsibilities by USAID and the GOUV essential to the productive implementation of the UFRD project. The degree to which such responsibilities were actually carried out is therefore an important aspect of the evaluation process.

The first set of obligations required that the Ministry of Rural Development incorporate the project into its Planning Cell, provide office space and furniture, appoint a Project Director, appoint two senior research associates from within the GOUV, integrate the project into the Ministry's coordination mechanisms to facilitate contact with other GOUV agencies, provide the project with temporary vehicles and inform the ORD's of their responsibilities with respect to the project.

With the exception of one item, the Ministry executed these responsibilities in a reasonable fashion. This was the appointment of the Project Director who was with the project until December 1, 1979. This individual could not provide a significant part of his time to project activities, and so reduced the effective technical manpower on the Voltaic side by 33%. To the extent that the project lacked a director during the period, the loss amounted to almost 100% for this function.

The second set of obligations required that the respective ORD directors facilitate project efforts and establish the project within their planning cells, provide temporary office space to the team, and with the Prefects coordinate the project with other sectoral agencies of the Prefecture. In most regards these were executed in accordance with the ProAg. The

weak element occurred in the Fada ORD where the Director, apparently not having understood the purpose of the UFRD project after the contractor arrived, did not insist on closer collaboration between the UFRD team and others working on plans for the region; principally the planning effort undertaken by MSU for the region and the similar effort undertaken by the UNCHBP for the town of Fada N'Gourma. This resulted in a degree of double employment and a missed opportunity in terms of technical exchange.

The third set of obligations required AID to contract technical services for the project in the capacity of Deputy Director and to co-sponsor and co-finance the project with the GOUV. Execution of the first of these responsibilities left much to be desired and has been a principal factor in having the project fall short of its objectives. The issue is that although the ProAg was signed in August 1977, the contractor was not on station until March 1979; meaning that the project was at least 12 months, if not 18 months, late in getting started. Even though the contractor had a two-year contract option through March 1981 (the second year, as envisaged in the ProAg, being composed of quarterly visits), it was apparently not until February 1980 that attention was given to extending the ProAg for a corresponding period. By then the idea of an "implementation" phase and the administrative problems involving the project at the time had made the mission unenthusiastic about such an extension. The project thus has a balance of about \$110,000 in unexpended funds. Thus the principal failure in terms of execution of responsibilities in this project was that of AID.

ANNEX 7

May 27, 1980

Mr. Loc Eckersley
Acting USAID Mission Director
Ouagadougou, Upper Volta

Dear Mr. Eckersley,

After having reviewed the progress made by the "Urban Functions in Rural Development" project team, I have drawn a general conclusion that the final output represents a level of achievement corresponding to what should have been expected one year ago; had circumstances not compromised the timely execution of tasks envisaged in the Project Agreement. These circumstances, which will be described in more detail in my evaluation report and which I will discuss further with you prior to my departure from Ouagadougou, revolve essentially around the delayed arrival of the contractor and the lack of adequate technical supervision of the project before and after the latter's arrival.

In brief, although the project was officially initiated in August 1977 with periodic technical support from DS/UD, substantive efforts were not begun until the contractor arrived in March 1979; the delay being apparently caused by administrative bottlenecks within AID/Washington. After the contractor's arrival, a combination of inadvertent oversight and local administrative problems with respect to the project resulted in an absence of careful technical supervision. Under these circumstances the project made two serious errors. The first was that it bit off more than it could chew with respect to survey needs and so embarked upon an analysis of 1400 settlements rather than the 60 or so implied in the ProAg. Surveys were not completed until February 1980, thus leaving little time for analysis, project identification and report preparation. The second error was that the meaning and purpose of UFRD was largely missed and so the data which was gathered was incomplete and not subjected to the kinds of examination specified generally in the ProAg.

Had the contractor arrived at the date originally expected, these issues would have been raised a year ago and corrected; and there would still have remained a year in front of the Project for gaps to be filled and substantive analyses to be undertaken. For that second year the resident contractor would have been replaced by quarterly technical assistance visits and the local team would have proceeded

largely on its own. Unfortunately, the initial delay of one year has not been accompanied by a 1 year slide in the official termination date, and so there has been insufficient time to make up for the delay and errors mentioned. I have therefore, for all intents and purposes, been evaluating half of a project.

Because there are sufficient funds remaining in the project for another year of effort, the GOUV, and in particular the Ministry of Rural Development, may make an official request to the USAID Mission to have the project extended in order to fulfill the mandate for it set forward in the ProAg; and may argue justifiably that up to a point its inability to achieve the results of the ProAg were caused by inadequacies in delivery of USAID inputs.

From my own perspective, mostly based on an appraisal of the relatively high potential and motivation of the local team and their abilities to grasp and develop technical matters in a short time, I would see no objection to the continuance of the project in its present or in a reasonably modified form. My observations are compelling enough to suggest a certain wisdom in having the project extended to a logical conclusion; and I would suspect DS/UD to concur in this sentiment. Any such extension would, however, require assurances from DS/UD of qualified technical support on a quarterly basis, assurances from the GOUV of the continued participation of current individuals in the project - especially the continuance of the current Project Director in a full-time capacity; and assurances from the Mission that the project would be monitored carefully and regularly (say, at least for 3 hours each month).

Since the project's progress would necessarily fall within the immediate responsibility of the Mission, and since the mission may have agendas other than ones directly tied to the project (but which nevertheless affect the decision criteria regarding the utility of extending it), the issue of whether to extend it or not is effectively yours to negotiate with the GOUV. However, for purposes of the evaluation, it would be most useful to me and to DS/UD to have in writing, at the appropriate time, an explanation of the Mission's final decision one way or the other.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you and other Mission staff for the assistance you have provided in facilitating my evaluation efforts.

Yours Truly,



Simon M. Fass
Practical Concepts Inc.
(Consultant to USAID -
DS/UD)